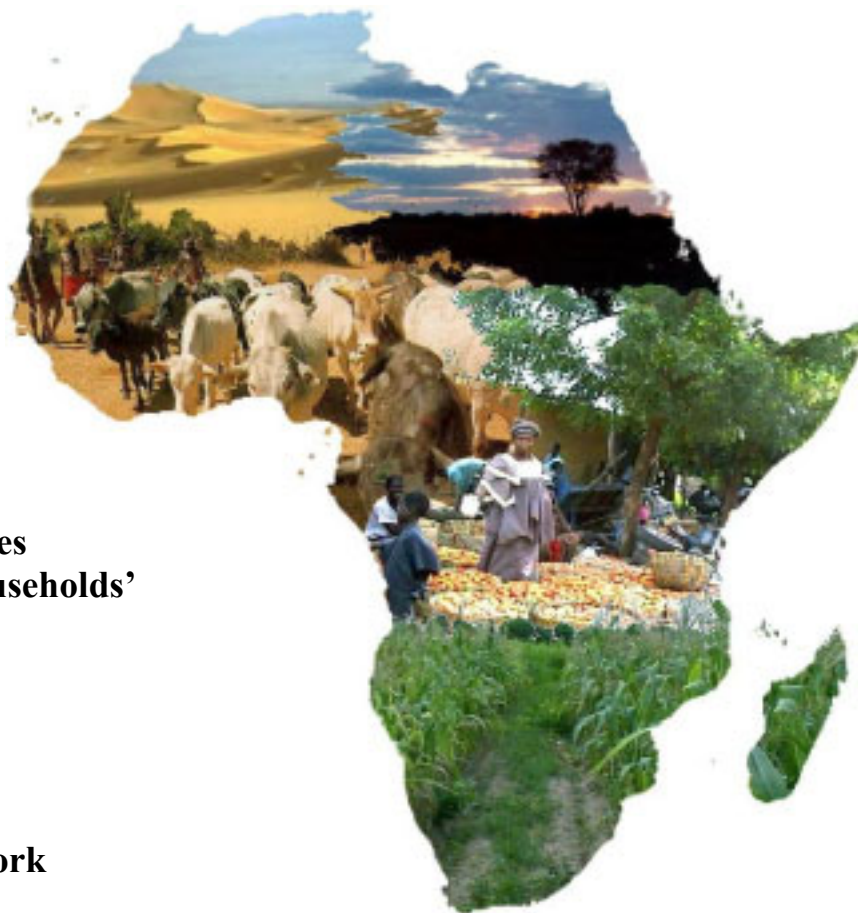




**Mini-Manual for Field Representatives
for Understanding and Assessing Households'
Risk of Food Shortage**

**AOT-I-00-00-00142-00
Task Order #1**

Famine Early Warning System Network



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FEWS-NET MINI-MANUAL FOR FIELD REPRESENTATIVES

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Introduction

The following mini-manual is intended to outline the new FEWS analytical framework, its associated information requirements and to introduce some specific tasks that link to core concept areas. As such, the mini-manual provides general guidance on common information objectives to be used by the FEWS Net Representatives as a template for country-specific planning.

The document is organized in three sections: 1. Vulnerability/Baseline Information; 2. Hazard/Shock Information; and 3. Risk/Outcome Analysis. The reader is encouraged to move throughout the document to relevant sub-categories using the blue hypertext buttons (if viewing from a computer). For the most part sub-category text is limited to one page in order to maintain a high level of focus and clarity and to help the reader see the connections between sub-categories and the three concept areas.

This guidance is introductory, designed to help fill the gap in the next six months between start-up and field training sessions. Further field guidance will be forthcoming in the next few months to provide specific tools and techniques for investigating the three concept areas outlined above and introduced below.

The Analytical Framework & Associated Information Requirements

HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER

Vulnerability to hazard & Hazard = Risk of food shortage
(internal cause) (external cause) (outcome)

Baseline analysis:

Tackles the fundamental question of how people survive, translating rural economies into useful analytical backdrops.

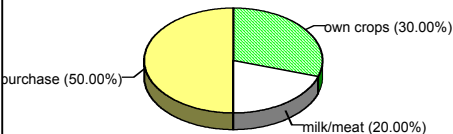
Defining the magnitude of a problem:

Involves translating hazard information into economic consequences, comparing historical data sets to current values.

The outcome analysis:

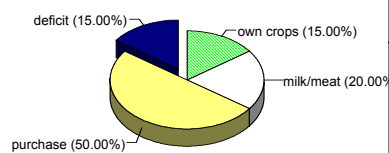
Conducted on a seasonal basis (e.g. pre- or post-harvest) or in response to a predicted or observed hazard (such as a flood, or a price rise).

Normal Sources of Food



The drought will result in 50% of normal crop production

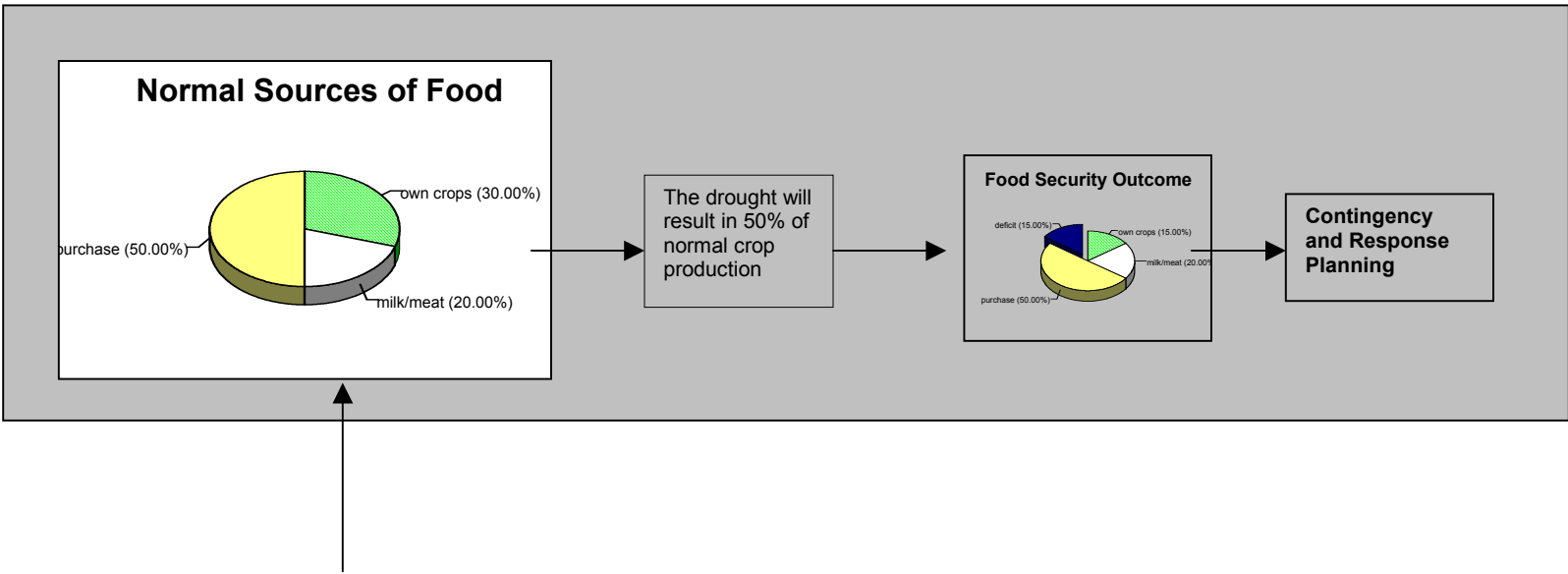
Food Security Outcome



Contingency and Response Planning

A crucial difference between the 'old' and 'new' approaches:

- The new approach uses 'static' baseline pictures to 'model' or predict the food security outcome using variable hazard information. The outcome analysis is fast and transparent. Field visits in the new approach are only conducted to build baseline pictures and confirm hazard information if/when necessary. This means that when a hazard occurs there is no need for lengthy field visits. As long as good monitoring information exists, analysis can take place quickly with subsequent response plans drawn up.
- FEWS methods in the past tended to use field assessments as a means of determining the outcome. Field visits took place in response to emergencies, and were designed typically to look for signs of stress as indicators of the outcome. Because field visits are necessarily targeted at specific areas, it was difficult to generalize and make comparative analyses. The fact that a field visit was required to 'confirm' the emergency meant lengthy lag times between problem identification and analysis.



VULNERABILITY/BASELINE INFORMATION OVERVIEW

Baseline information comprises a set of information dedicated to answering the fundamental question of how people survive in most years. The basic conviction here is that if we understand how people live normally – how they obtain their food, their cash income, and spend their money - we will be able to discern how changes or shocks will affect them. Because people live in different ways depending on geography and wealth or status, it is important to stratify the groups we want to analyze by these two major variables.

Stratification

Geographic Zoning

Economic differentiation

Food/Income/Expenditure Patterns

Within homogenous zones and economic groupings, the basic requirement is to piece together how typical households obtain food, cash income, and spend their money in most years. The relative importance of these options provides the critical reference point for understanding how shocks will affect these households.

Production Options (food & income)

Exchange Options (food & income)

Quantification

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GEOGRAPHIC ZONING

The reasoning behind it

Geographic zoning is necessary in order to identify households that share similar food and income options. Because these options determine who be vulnerable to which hazards, it's critical to group with like in order to conduct meaningful food security outcome analyses.

Traditional administrative zones, while useful for political and governance purposes, are not as useful for food security analysis. Homogenous ecological and economic zones transcend and spill across political boundaries; similarly, within administrative unit, it is common to find pastoralists alongside agriculturalists, or fishing communities.

Nonetheless, because resource allocation and service provision decisions are made on the basis administrative zones, not homogenous livelihood zones, we need to make sure that our livelihood zones correspond in some way to the lowest level administrative unit.

How to do it

People who share broadly similar food resources, sources of income are said to share the same food economy. Food economies can usually be defined geographically, in terms of topography, climate, ecology, and above all, agriculture.

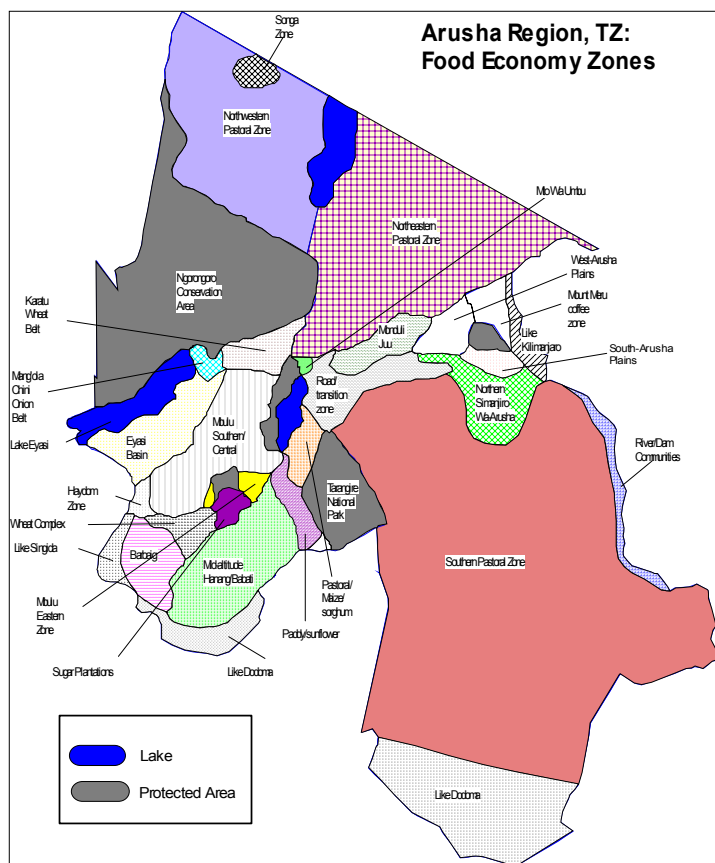
A good starting point is an agro-ecological map of the country. Better yet is an agro-economic map which goes one step further to take into consideration common use of resources or access to markets. Further layers of analysis might include soil maps, topography maps, or even historical analysis of NDVI. Baseline fieldwork is an important step in zoning as well, and sub-regional and village level key informants are essential in this exercise. It is necessary to refine, review and re-visit the zoning maps before, during and after any new information gathering campaign. Determining livelihood boundaries is a process, of which the end objective is to continually improve on the current knowledge and analytical capacity. It should not be seen as a one-off exercise.

What you can do about it now

- Gather available resource materials pertaining to agro-ecological and agro-economic maps.
- Interview national-level key informants to get their views on the best zoning maps.
- Acquire maps in digitized form if possible. Put together an initial zoning map for field-testing.
- Identify areas of 'chronic' food insecurity in need of immediate baseline work.

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An example of a food economy zoning map



may
like

often
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ECONOMIC DIFFERENTIATION

The reasoning behind it

Just as the same external shock will have a different effect on two separate food economy it will also have a varied impact on families in different wealth groups. Thus even within one economy zone analysts must make distinctions the ways in which families live.

Households with different levels of assets tend different things to get food. Poor households little land may work for richer households to get to buy food; rich families may use profits from agriculture as capital to engage in trade. In the of a crisis, poor and rich households will be affected differently and therefore warrant separate examination. The elucidation of differences between households and the links between households is central to building up appropriate 'vulnerability' baseline information.

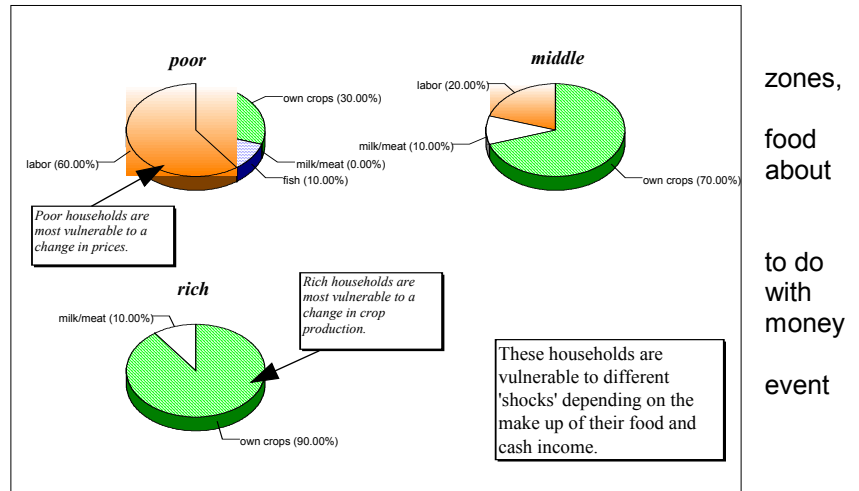
How to do it

In the field wealth categories are defined through interviews local key informants. 'Poor' and 'rich' are thus relative to local standards, not to an externally defined one. Often these standards are predictable along general livelihood lines: for instance in pastoral areas, 'richness' is almost always defined the number of livestock a household owns; in agricultural areas, on the other hand, land is the most important variable defining poverty.

Outlines of interviewing procedures for obtaining wealth breakdowns will be provided during the baseline training session. In general, the process is one of defining categories then quantifying the categories in relation to the rest of the population. The first part is done through semi-structured interviews and the second through rigorous proportional piling exercises.

What you can do about it now

- This process tends to be field intensive and primarily field informed. There are not many useful secondary sources available on this topic. However, you may come across some exceptions and it is worth taking a look at PVO reports or government income surveys which might be a starting point in some of the more highly commercialized areas. Occasionally you might find land distribution studies that help provide a context for agricultural areas. Start by seeking out and compiling relevant secondary data and reports on the topic of wealth differentiation to build up a background before going to the field.



An example of a wealth breakdown



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PRODUCTION OPTIONS (Food & Income)

What they are

Production options comprise the set of alternatives that households employ for gaining access to food that involve a direct relationship between production and consumption. In other words, food produced for the family for consumption purposes. The important thing to remember is that we are interested in tracing *how households gain access to food* (rather than documenting exactly what they eat) because knowing how households get food indicates what will affect that access. Put simply, we are detailing **access** patterns, not **consumption** patterns.

There are only four categories of production options:

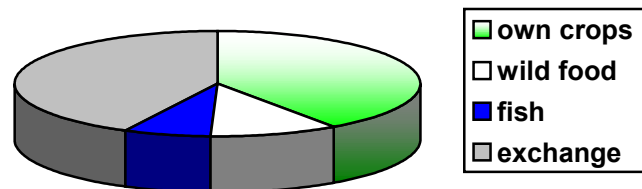
- Own crops
- Own livestock (milk/meat)
- Own fish
- Wild foods (gathered by the household)

How to find out about them

The task is to piece together the relative importance of these options for different types of households (poor, medium, rich, etc.) for both food and cash income. As a general rule, although most countries contain large databases of agricultural production statistics, most of the detailed disaggregated production information as it relates to household food income will come from field interviews. For instance, you might be able to get information on expected average yields for different crops from secondary information, but you are unlikely to find out just how important crop production is for poorer, middle or richer households in a particular area.

The final estimation is based on an understanding of how much of each source a family may have access to over the year (or in a season), and in turn, a knowledge of that food's calorific contribution. By grounding the investigation in nutritional principles, and a basic knowledge of what is possible or plausible in different production climates, it is possible to construct a tight and confident final picture of production's role in people's access to food. This in turn provides insights into the opportunities and constraints surrounding production options in different areas, highlighting where production might be a vehicle for economic development, and alternatively, where it is on its own unlikely to ever meet people's basic food requirements.

For instance, say you found out that poor households in area 'X' produced around 5 sacks of maize most years, gathered 1 sack of a wild food resembling groundnuts, and obtained a total of 360 kg of fish over the year. The following pie chart illustrates the relative importance of these options in calorific terms.



What you can do about filling in this information requirement now

- Most of this information will come from field interviews with specific wealth groups. It is usually not possible to find production information disaggregated by income group in secondary information. However, as a good starting point for fieldwork, it is useful to think through the likely production options available in different agro-economic zones.
- Start by compiling and mapping out yield and production statistics by sub-national unit, including livestock data (numbers and seasonal milk yields) and the use of indigenous wild foods, listing scientific and vernacular names where possible.

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EXCHANGE OPTIONS (Food & Income)

What they are

Exchange options consist of non-reciprocal flows of food from outside the household to inside in exchange for something the household has (e.g. livestock) or does (e.g. labor). In other words, with the exception of direct gifts, this category consists of all options for obtaining food that require an exchange of cash, labor or goods. Again, what's important to document here is the source of leverage to get the food – how much labor and whose? Where does the cash come from? Who produces the goods that are exchanged? Of equal importance are normal rates of exchange because this tells us how much food people can expect in exchange for their labor, capital or goods.

The complete set of exchange options is as follows:

- Cash crop sales
- Livestock sales (including milk/meat)
- Wild food sales
- Employment income (including labor sales and remittances)
- Non-food product sales ('self-employment': firewood, charcoal, handicrafts, etc.)
- Other trade (transport and resale of goods/petty trade)
- Non-reciprocal gifts

How to find out about them

As with the production options, the task is to piece together the relative importance of these exchange options for different types of households (poor, medium, rich, etc.) for both food and cash income. Again, as a general rule, although you will likely find databases with price information, it is difficult to obtain disaggregated information on the role of exchange in household income. The most fruitful source of information on this topic is found in the field through interviews with different types of households.

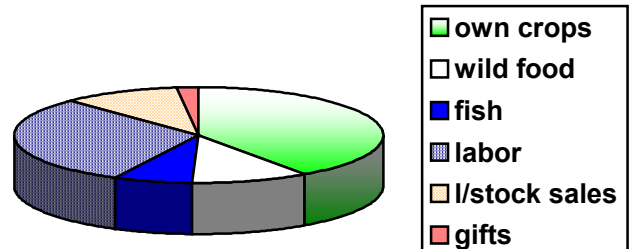
The final estimation is based on the conclusions you draw regarding the household's access to and exploitation of different markets for obtaining cash or food. This judgement will be based on the results of interviews on issues like the number of days spent laboring, the number of livestock normally sold, the time spent collecting and selling firewood, etc., and the cash or food equivalents received in exchange. In the end, there must be a logical basis for the judgements: household labor estimates must not exceed household labor available to cover stated cumulative expenditure on both production and exchange options; stated supply of labor cannot exceed demand in labor markets; sales of cash crops cannot exceed normal production minus consumption; and so on. In other words, rigorous cross checking and adherence to rules of internal consistency must be standard components of field inquiries.

What you can do about filling in this information requirement now

- Most of this information will come from field interviews with specific wealth groups. It is usually not possible to find exchange information disaggregated by income group in secondary information.
- However, as a good starting point for fieldwork, think through the likely exchange options available in different agro-economic zones.
- Start by compiling and mapping out market data (price series) by sub-national unit, including livestock, grain and other commodity markets where possible.

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In addition to the production information detailed above, let's say you found out that poor households in area 'X' obtained the equivalent of 3 ½ sacks of grain from labor sales, 1 ¼ sacks of grain from livestock sales, and ¼ sack of grain from gifts. You could fill in the remainder of the pie chart as follows:



QUANTIFICATION

The reasoning behind it

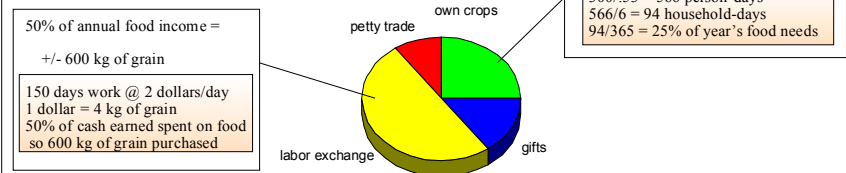
Assessing the relative importance of different activities involves asking questions of 'how much': how much does a typical family normally produce? How many livestock does a typical family sell in a year? For how long do men migrate and work on the harvest in the neighboring region?

With appropriate selection of informants (stratification) and proper cross-checking within and between interviews (to ensure internal consistency), the judgement of informants on quantitative questions deserves the same confidence that we instinctively give to their judgement on qualitative questions such as the types and uses of livestock. That this is not a statistical confidence by no means negates the value of the information; we are aiming at a picture where 'things add up' in a more basic sense through a combination of information and judgement.

Why it's important:

- provides a basis for comparing levels of 'poverty'
- helps prioritize scarce resources between areas
- helps determine magnitude of effect of change
- helps determine levels of resource input

How it's done:



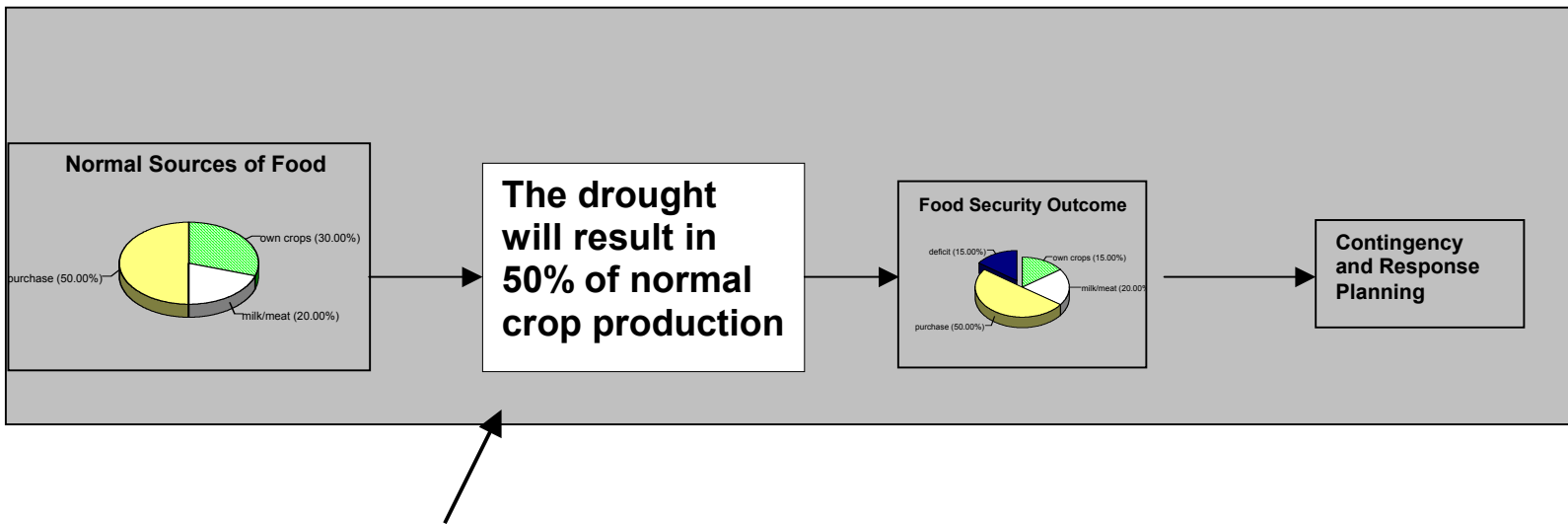
Rigor comes particularly from the focus on the fact that there is a minimum 'food income' below which year-on-year survival is impossible. Things have to 'add up', not just in terms of the family food budget totaling at least 100% of minimum required, but also in that the cumulative activities of households must correspond with the wealth of, and income-earning opportunities in, the local economy. For example, what type of work can the better-off farmer offer to the poor, for how long, and at what wage rate? This has to be reconciled with a statement of the type: "a typical poor farmer depends for four months of the year on the casual employment offered by neighboring richer farmers."

Crosschecking information between informants is extremely important, as is comparison of informants' answers with such trustworthy survey or secondary source information as exists. In South Sudan, for example, many people will deny that they sell or exchange cattle, but nonetheless the ratio of bulls to cows in Nuer cattle herds in a survey undertaken before 1983 was 1:17. What, then was happening to the other bulls? And how were people obtaining grain during their seasonal migrations with cattle, if not via exchange? By probing in this way it should be possible to weed out contradictions and arrive at a confident conclusion.

What you can do about it now

- Start becoming familiar with the calorific values of the major staple foods in your country. Study nutritional value tables and compile a country-specific chart for your use.

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HAZARD/SHOCK INFORMATION OVERVIEW

Hazard information is brought together in order to answer the question: what is the nature and magnitude of the problem facing particular communities?

A hazard can be thought of as an external cause or catalyst that results in specific economic consequences within a particular geographic area. Typical hazards might include wars, droughts/floods, or even policy changes.

Hazards need to be conceptually differentiated from the economic consequences they effect, and for the purposes of common terminology, we can call the initial external cause the *hazard* and the resulting economic effect the *shock factor*. Typical shock factors would be changes in production levels (crop, livestock, fishing or wild food) or changes in markets (either in terms of physical access or prices) or even changes in transfers (such as government entitlement programs).

[Translating hazards into shock factors](#)

[Organizing the information for outcome analysis](#)

[Sources of Information](#)

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TRANSLATING HAZARDS INTO SHOCK FACTORS

Just knowing that a hazard might occur or has occurred is not sufficient for our analytical purposes. As illustrated in the example below, we need to know the economic effects of the hazard and its specific magnitude in different geographic areas. Hazard information should be compiled, organized and analyzed with this goal in mind.

<u>Hazard</u>	→ <u>Economic effects/shock factor</u>
Drought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reduced crop production (e.g. crop production 30% of normal) - reduced livestock production (e.g. milk yields 80% of normal) - loss of income from cash crop sales, livestock sales, or loss of employment on local farms (e.g. daily wages 70% of normal) - change in availability of wild foods (80% of normal) - change in availability of fish (130% of normal)
War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - market closure (e.g. staple food prices increase 100%) - loss in crops/livestock/inputs from looting (e.g. crop production 30% of normal) - reduced access to critical land for planting or grazing (e.g. milk yields 25% of normal) - disruption of trade and transport (e.g. effective 75% reduction in livestock prices) - reduced access to outside assistance (e.g. food aid 0% of normal) - displacement (total loss of food and cash income for displaced & increased demands on host population)

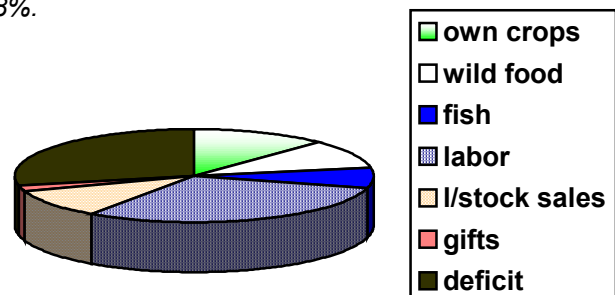
The important thing to note here is that it is necessary to translate the hazard into quantified economic consequences and link these clearly to baseline information on production and exchange options. Otherwise, the value of hazard information in relation to food security analysis is lost.

What you can do about it now

- Start to think about hazards that have occurred in your country over the past 10 years or so and current or predicted hazards.
- List the ways they translated into specific economic consequences in the past and the ways current/predicted hazards might be translated now.

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The link between the hazard and its effects is clear when the hazard is quantified appropriately. If we use the example from 'Exchange options', 30% of normal crop production results in a food deficit of around 28%.



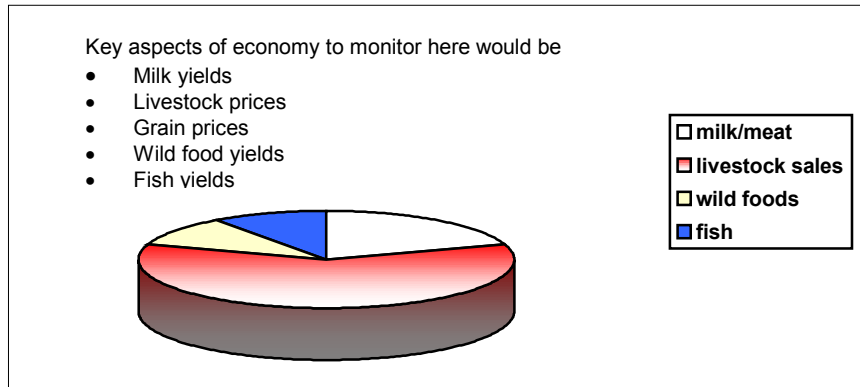
ORGANIZING THE INFORMATION FOR OUTCOME ANALYSIS

The question is, of course, how do you translate hazards into quantified economic consequences and link these clearly to baseline information on production and exchange options?

The basic steps for compiling relevant, usable hazard information are listed below.

1. Determine relevant shock factors using baseline information as guide.

- In most cases crop production and price information will be essential shock information to analyze. However, there may be cases, for instance with fishing communities or pastoralist groups, where crop production is of minimal importance. Spend time organizing only the information you need in order to conduct the food security outcome analysis for that particular group.



2. Organize secondary information data sets on the relevant shock factors (both historical and current values) according to food economy zonal boundaries.

- Historical data sets are organized according to official administrative boundaries. Therefore, in order to use the government's data sets containing historical values we need to match administrative zones to livelihood zones (even if this is a rough matching). The smaller the administrative unit the better for our purposes since it allows us to mold the analysis more closely to the livelihood zones.

Hypothetical Example: Lowland pastoral zone

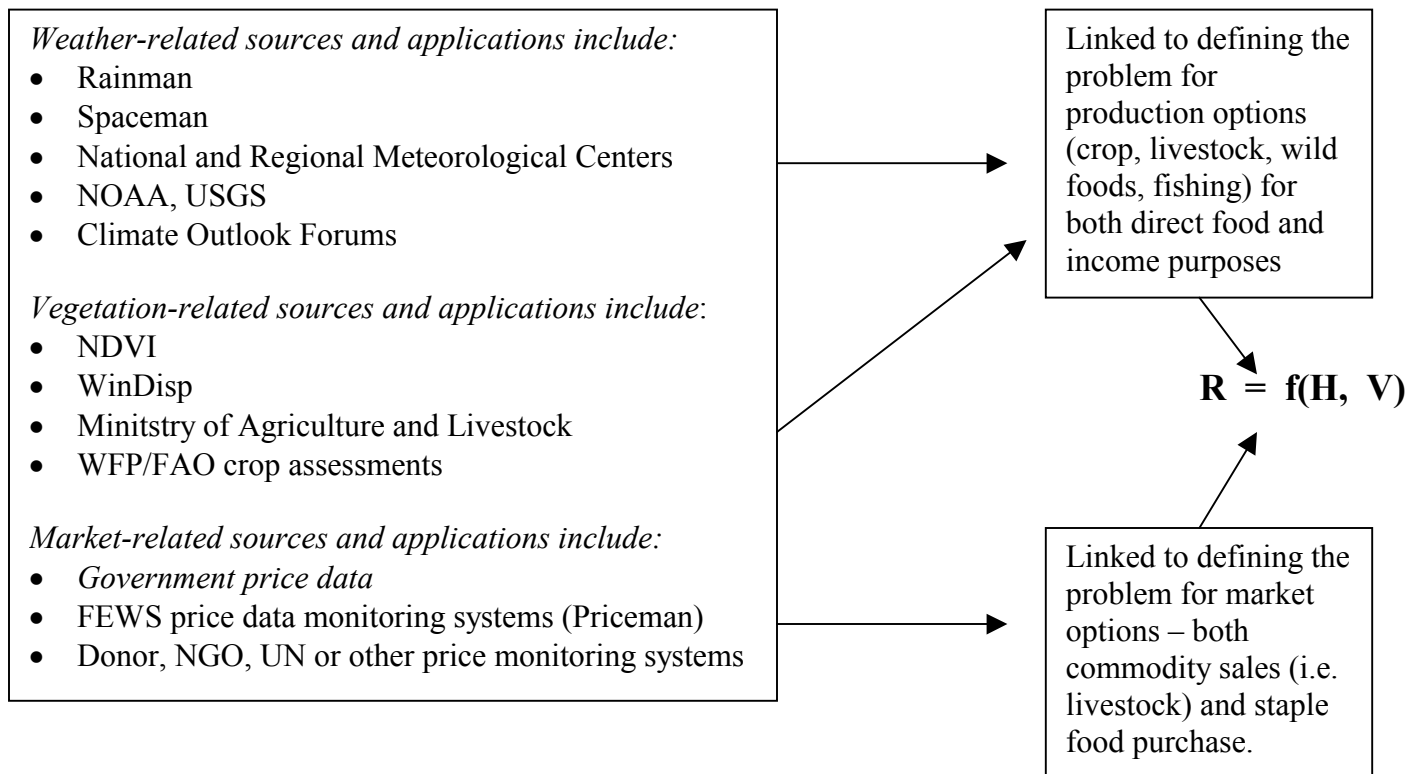
Agricultural Production (MT)		1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Current year
Region 1	Dist. 1	2000	1000	2300	4000	2000	3800	2200	3000	1300	1900	1000
	Dist. 3	2500	1200	2200	3500	2100	3300	2400	2000	1700	2000	900
	Dist. 6	1800	1300	2000	3000	2200	3500	2100	2500	1555	2200	1200
Region 4	Dist. 10	2200	900	2500	3800	1800	3000	2000	1900	1200	2000	1000
	Dist. 11	2300	800	2400	4200	2025	3000	2500	2900	1600	2500	800
AVERAGE		2160	1040	2280	3700	2025	3320	2240	2460	1251	2120	980

3. Use historical data set values as a reference point for calculating current departure from normal.

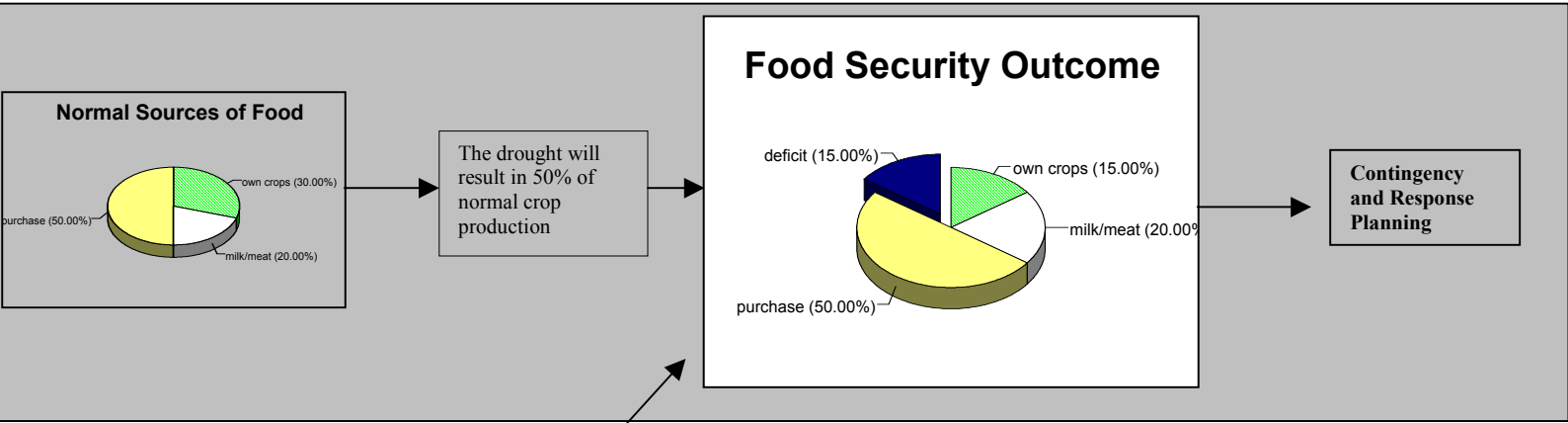
- Two potential reference points can be used, depending on available field information: 1. The actual 'normal' year as defined by field informants (e.g. 1995) or 2. The average from a specified time series (for instance, average over the years 1990 – 2000). The choice you make on reference point depends on a number of factors, including the feasibility of applying one base year to a whole zone (extreme production variations within zones may preclude this), the validity of using a long term 'average' in areas where 'average' has little meaning, and the quality of existing data sets.
- In the example above, if you chose to use the average from 1990 – 1999 the current year problem would be 43% of normal. If you chose a reference year, say 1994, the current problem would be 48% of normal.

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SOURCES OF HAZARD INFORMATION



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RISK/OUTCOME ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

Risk or Outcome Analysis is conducted in order to answer the question: what effect will the problem (as specified by the hazard information) have on households' access to food (as described by the vulnerability information)?

[Spreadsheet Analysis](#)

[Emergency assessments](#)

[Scenarios](#)

[Linking the information to decision-making](#)

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SPREADSHEET ANALYSIS

Food Economy : Eastern two acre: 1996

© The Food Economy Group, 1999

BASELINE ACCESS				PROBLEM SPECIFICATION			CURRENT ACCESS		SUMMARY		
Sources of Food : Middle HHs											
	Baseline Access	Expand -ability	Max. Access	Problem Food Intake %norm kcals/day	Con.prob %norm	Max.curr Access	Curr. Access	Baseline Access	Initial Deficit	Curr. Access	
Crops	65%	14%	79%	48% baseline:	48%	38%	38%	65%	31%	38%	
milk/meat			0%	100% 1900	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Ration		0%	0%	100% for analysis:	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Purchase	35%		97%	1900		16%	16%	35%	7%	16%	
Gifts		40%	40%	100%	100%	40%	40%	0%	0%	40%	
			0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Deficit							6%	0%	62%	6%	
Total	100%		216%			94%			38%		
						adj.fact =	1.10				

Income : Middle HHs

	Baseline Access	Expand -ability	Max. Access	Problem %norm	Comm. Price	Staple Price	Con.prob %norm	Max.curr Access	Curr. Access	Baseline Access	Initial Deficit	Curr. Access
%food equivalents												
crop sales			0%	48%	100%	233%	21%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
l/stock sales			0%	100%	100%	233%	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ration sales		0%	0%	100%	100%	233%	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
labor	23%		23%	100%	130%	233%	56%	13%	13%	23%	13%	13%
cash crops	14%	-14%	0%	55%	150%	233%	35%	0%	0%	14%	5%	0%
livestock sales	130%		130%	100%	79%	233%	34%	44%	44%	130%	44%	44%
nonfood sales	54%		54%	100%	100%	233%	43%	23%	23%	54%	23%	23%
			0%	100%	100%	233%	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
total:	221%	-14%	207%					80%	80%	221%	85%	80%

Expenditure : Middle HHs

	Baseline Expend	Problem %norm	Con.prob %norm	Max.curr Expend	Curr. Expend	Baseline Expend	Initial Deficit	Curr. Expend
%food equivalents								
min.non-staple	110%	135%	58%	64%	64%	110%	64%	64%
Staple	35%			16%	16%	35%	7%	16%
Other	76%				0%	76%	15%	0%
total:	221%			80%	80%	221%	85%	80%

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NOTES ON THE SPREADSHEET

- The spreadsheet is designed as a simple calculator to aid and speed the manipulation of food economy field data. It combines baseline information with information on a current problem, such as crop failure or an increase in food prices, to analyze the problem's impact on overall access to food at household level.
- A separate spreadsheet is required for each food economy area and each socio-economic group. The example spreadsheet (eastern zone – middle) contains data for middle households from Eastern Zone food economy area of western Arusha Region, Tanzania, and looks at the impact of a problem of crop failure combined with an increase in staple food prices and a decrease in livestock prices.
- The spreadsheet is divided horizontally into three sections, from top to bottom: sources of food, income and expenditure, and vertically into four sections, from left to right: baseline access, problem specification, current access and summary. The output from this spreadsheet is found in the summary section to the right.
- All the numbers in the spreadsheet are percentages. Data on food is expressed as a % of total household food needs. Data on income and expenditure are also expressed in food terms, i.e. in terms of the % of annual food needs that can be bought with the corresponding amount of cash. Put another way, income is expressed in terms of its food purchasing power rather than in terms of its cash value. Data entered to specify a problem of access to food are also expressed as a percentage, in this case the % access compared to the baseline year.
- Information from a baseline food economy assessment is entered in the cells with a single black outline. This information is entered only once.
- Information on a problem of current access (crop production as a % of baseline etc.) is entered in the shaded cells. The information in these cells can easily be changed to look at various scenarios (different levels of crop production or different levels of price change, for example).
- The spreadsheet has a number of advanced features, including:
 - a graphics page, graphing summary information on baseline access, the initial deficit and current access.
 - links between certain food and income sources such as crops and crop sales, so that increases in crop sales can be reflected in reduced consumption of crops and vice versa.
 - the option of forcing the sale of crops (or another source of food) to cover minimum non-staple food expenditure, where other sources of income are insufficient to cover this expenditure.

The notes on the spreadsheet provided here are meant to be a brief introduction to the spreadsheet. Full training on the spreadsheet will be provided as part of wider FNR field training exercises.

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EMERGENCY ASSESSMENTS

The objective of an emergency assessment is to provide decision-makers with a timely analysis of the immediate consequences for household food security of a particular event or set of events that have already occurred, and the scale of both immediate and longer term relief needs. The process involves three steps:

1. define the nature and magnitude of the problem (see [problem specification](#) section above.)
2. run the specified problem using the spreadsheet as an analysis tool (see [spreadsheet analysis](#) section)
3. if there is a need for outside intervention, answer the questions how much, where, to whom and for how long?

SCENARIOS

The objective of scenario analysis is to assist in preparing for potential crises. In the field this would involve posing questions of the 'what if' variety, while the analysis would seek to define the options for intervention by outside agencies and the scale of intervention that might be required. This should facilitate a more timely and appropriate response should the crisis actually erupt. The analysis should also serve to highlight the critical and minimum information needed for a rapid emergency assessment. The process of analysis would be similar to the emergency assessment analysis, but the problem specifications would be hypothetical, based on best estimates of what might happen.

LINKING THE INFORMATION TO DECISION MAKERS

It goes without saying that the purpose of gathering and analyzing food security information is to help decision-makers plan the most appropriate and timely means for supporting local livelihoods, responding to emergencies, and helping people recover from the effects of shocks. Finding ways to link pertinent information to decision makers is an ongoing challenge. One way that FEWS NET intends to meet the challenge is by engaging network partners in a consistent exchange of information and knowledge. It is hoped that these exchanges bring increased awareness of immediate needs and inform decision-makers of the pros and cons of different options for response,

At the same time, we need to find ways to protect the FNRs' role as information gatherer without compromising his/her role as key informant. The use of scenarios to highlight different response options will be an essential aspect of FEWS NET's strategy for reaching the ears of decision-makers. With the spreadsheet analyses we will have a unique capacity to demonstrate the consequence of different actions (including not responding) on household food security. Scenarios will allow FNRs to make a point without necessarily being seen to make a recommendation, which is crucial given the FNRs sensitive position between information sources and decision makers.

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